A COMPANION FOR CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS;

OR, THE

GREAT IMPORTANCE,

AND

PRINCIPAL DUTIES

OF THE

PRIESTLY OFFICE.

BY THE RIGHT REV. FATHER IN GOD,

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LATE LORD BISHOP OF ST DAVID'S.

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ERRATA.

Page 15, Note *(h)* for Διδακτὸς read Διδακτὸς

18, Note *(l)* for Τίχυη read Τίχυη

51, Line 19, *dele* pray, and for *attend* read *attends*.

Line 20, for *pity* read *pray*.

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CONTENTS.

His Viſitation Sermon. See Biſhop Bull's Works, vol. I. p. 223. (Mr Nelſon's edition.)

His Charge to his Dioceſe. See vol. III. p. 855.

His Circular Letter to the Clergy.

A

VISITATION SERMON,

CONCERNING THE

GREAT DIFFICULTY AND DANGER

OF THE

PRIESTLY OFFICE.

ST JAMES, CHAP. III. VER. I.

"MY BRETHREN, BE NOT MANY MASTERS,
"KNOWING THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE
"THE GREATER CONDEMNATION."

THE text may at firſt ſight appear to ſome to ſtand at a very wide diſtance from the preſent occaſion. But I hope, by that time I have ſpent a little pains in explaining it, I ſhall ſet the text and occaſion at a perfect agreement.

The words therefore, are, by interpreters, diverſly expounded. Among the reſt, two interpretations there are, which ſtand as the faireſt candidates for our reception.

1. Some underſtand the Maſters here in my text, to be proud, malicious cenſors and judges of other men's actions; and ſo expound the text as a prohibition of raſh and uncharitable judgment; and make it parallel to that of our Saviour, Matt.vii. ver. 1, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Be not raſh and haſty in cenſuring or judging the actions of others, or ſpeaking evil of them, conſidering that, by ſo doing, you will but procure a greater judgment of God upon yourſelves. The chief, if not the only argument for this interpretation, is the Context of the Apoſtle's diſcourſe, which in the following verſes, is wholly ſpent againſt the vices of the tongue. But,

2. Others there are, who interpret the Maſters in the text, to be Paſtors or Teachers, in the church of God; and accordingly underſtand the words as a ſerious caution againſt the raſh undertaking of the Paſtoral Office,

Office, or function, as an office attended with great difficulty and danger, a task very hard to be discharged, and wherein whoever miscarries, makes himself thereby liable to a severer judgment of Almighty God.

This latter interpretation (with submission I speak it) seems to me, almost beyond doubt, the genuine sense of the Apostle. The reasons are evident in the text itself: For, 1. Unless we thus expound the words, it will be hard to give a rational account of this word πολλοὶ, (many) why it should be inserted. For, if we understand those Masters the Apostle speaks of, to be rash judges and censurers of others, 'tis most certain then, one such would be too many, and the multiplicity of them would not be the only culpable thing. But, on the other side, if we receive the latter interpretation, the account of the word πολλοὶ is easily rendered according to the paraphrase of Erasmus, thus; (a) "Let not Pastors or Teachers "be too vulgar and cheap among you; let

(a) Ne passim ambiatis esse magistri.

" not every man ruſh into ſo ſacred an " office and function." And Druſius's gloſs on this very word is remarkable: " Summa ſummarum; quo pauciores ſunt " magiſtri, eo melius agitur cum populo. " Nam ut medicorum olim Cariam, ita doc- " torum & magiſtrorum nunc multitudo " perdit rempublicam. Utinam vanus " ſim." I need not Engliſh the words to thoſe whom they concern.

2. If we embrace any other interpretation, we muſt of neceſſity depart from the manifeſt propriety of the Greek word, which our tranſlators render Maſters. The word is διδάσκαλοι, which whoſo underſtands the firſt elements of the Greek tongue, knows to be derived from διδάσκω, (to teach) and ſo literally to ſignify teachers; " Be not many " Teachers."

And ſo accordingly the Syriac renders it by a word, which the learned Druſius tells us, is parallel to the Hebrew מוריכם which undoubtedly ſignifies Doctors or Teachers.

Theſe reaſons are ſufficient to juſtify our interpretation, though I might add the authority

thority of the Antients, who generally follow this ſenſe, as alſo the concurrent judgment of our moſt learned modern annotators, Eraſmus, Vatablus, Caſtellio, Eſtius, Druſius, Grotius, with many others.

As for the connexion of the words thus explained, with the following diſcourſe of the Apoſtle, I ſuppoſe this very eaſy account may be given of it: the moderation and government of the tongue, (on which St James, in the ſequel of the chapter, wholly inſiſts) though it be a general duty, (for there is no man's tongue ſo lawleſs as to be exempted from the dominion of right reaſon and religion) yet it is a duty wherein the Paſtor or Teacher hath a peculiar concern. The Miniſter's tongue is a chief tool and inſtrument of his profeſſion, that which *ex officio* he muſt often make uſe of: he lies under a neceſſity of ſpeaking much and often, and the wiſe man tells us, "In "the multitude of words there wanteth not "ſin," Prov. x. ver. 19. And, certainly, there is ſcarce any conſideration more powerful, to deter a man from undertaking

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the office of a Teacher, than this; how extremely difficult and almoſt impoſſible it is, for a man that ſpeaks much and often, ſo to govern his tongue, as to ſpeak nothing that either is itſelf unfit, or in an unfit time, or after an undue manner; and yet how highly every Teacher is concerned ſo to do.

So that it is a very eaſy knot, to faſten my text to the next verſe, thus: Let not every man ambitiouſly affect the office of a Teacher in the church of God, conſidering that it is an office of great difficulty and danger; "For in many things we offend all; if any "man offend not in word, the ſame is a "perfect man," &c. As if he had ſaid, As there are many ways, whereby the beſt of us do offend, ſo there is no way whereby we ſo eaſily fall into ſin, as by that ſlippery member the tongue; and there is no man more expoſed to this danger of tranſgreſſing with the tongue, than the Teacher, who makes ſo much and ſo frequent uſe of it. So that the Teacher is τέλειος ἀνὴρ, a rare and perfectly accompliſhed

liſhed man indeed, that hath acquired the perfect government of his tongue. He that can do that, who fails not in that piece of his duty, may eaſily alſo bridle his whole body, *i. e.* rightly manage himſelf in all the other parts of his paſtoral office. But this, as it is very neceſſary, ſo it is extremely difficult; and therefore *(b)* "be not many "Teachers."

To this it will not be amiſs to add, what Grotius wiſely obſerves, that the admonition of the Apoſtle concerning the vices of the tongue, ſubjoined to the caution in my text, *(c)* is chiefly directed againſt brawling and contentious diſputers; ſuch Teachers as abuſe their liberty of ſpeaking, unto looſe diſcourſes, and take occaſion from thence to vent their own ſpleen and paſſions; men of intemperate ſpirits, and virulent tongues, troublers rather than teachers of the people, whoſe tongues are indeed cloven tongues of fire, but not ſuch as the Apoſtles were endowed with from above; as

(b) Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε,

(c) Maxime directa eſt in rixoſos diſputatores.

as ſerving to burn rather than to enlighten; to kindle the flames of faction, ſtrife, and contention, rather than thoſe of piety and charity in the church of God.

And indeed, the direful and tragical effects, which the Apoſtle in this chapter aſcribes to the evil tongue, as that "It is a "fire, a world of iniquity, defiling the whole "body, (d) ſetting on fire the courſe of na-"ture, full of deadly poiſon," &c. are ſuch as are not ſo eaſily producible by the tongue of a private man, as of a Teacher: (e) "Whoſe diſcourſe" ſaith Eraſmus, "ſpreads its poiſon by ſo much the more "generally and effectually, as the authori-"ty of the ſpeaker is greater, and his ad-"vantage alſo of ſpeaking to many."

Having removed this ſeeming rub in the context, I return again to the text itſelf; wherein you may pleaſe to obſerve, 1. A ſerious diſſuaſive from the raſh undertaking of the Paſtoral Office; "My breth-"ren,

(d) Φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως.

(e) Cujus ſermo hoc latius ac periculoſius ſpargit ſuum venenum, quod auctoritate dicentis commendetur.

" ren, be not many Maſters," or Teachers. 2. A ſolid argument or reaſon to enforce it, drawn from the difficulty and danger thereof; " knowing that we ſhall re- " ceive," &c. μεῖζον κρῖμα, a greater, or ſeverer judgment, *i. e.* God will require more of us that are Teachers, than of others; we ſhall not eſcape or be acquitted in the divine judgment at ſo eaſy a rate as they. There is a place in the excellent book of Wiſdom, that is exactly parallel to my text, and gives great light to it, chap. vi. ver. 5. *(f)* " A ſharp judgment ſhall be " to them that are in high places." Where the οἱ ὑπερεχοντες, thoſe that are in high places in the ſtate, anſwer to the διδάσκαλοι in my text; the Teachers in the church: The κρίσις ἀπότομος, the ſharp, or the preciſe and ſevere judgment, to the μεῖζον κρῖμα, the greater judgment in the text.

I ſhall not at all inſiſt on the firſt branch of the diviſion, the diſſuaſive; as remembring that I am to preach, not an Ordination but a Viſitation ſermon; and to diſcourſe

(f) Κρίσις ἀπότομος ἐν τοῖς ὑπερεχουσι γίνεται

not to Candidates of Holy Orders, but to ſuch as are already engaged in that ſacred profeſſion. I come therefore to the reaſon or argument in the text, (as of very much concernment to all that are in the prieſtly office) drawn from the great difficulty and danger thereof. To repreſent both which, as fully as my ſhort allowance of time, and much ſhorter ſcantling of abilities will permit, ſhall be my preſent buſineſs.

And firſt, as to the difficulty of the Teacher's office, it is a very great difficulty fully to explain it. So many are the branches of his duty, that it were a tedious labour to reckon them up; Lord! what a taſk is it then to diſcharge them! I ſhall content myſelf therefore, *rudi Minerva*, briefly, and only in general, to deſcribe the chiefeſt requiſites, that are neceſſary to conſtitute a complete Teacher in the church of God; and even by that little which I ſhall ſay, I doubt not but it will appear, how very formidable, how tremendous an undertaking that function deſerves to be accounted.

counted. The Teacher's office then requires a very large Knowledge, a great Prudence, an exemplary Holineſs. And ſurely much is required of him, of whom theſe things are required.

1. Then, the firſt requiſite to the office of a Teacher, is a very large Knowledge. The very name of his office implies this; he is διδάσκαλος, a Teacher; and he that is ſuch, muſt be, as the Apoſtle requires, 1 Tim. iii. ver. 2. *(g)* apt, or fit to teach. And this he cannot, be unleſs he be *(h)* well learned and inſtructed himſelf, and furniſhed with a plentiful meaſure of divine knowledge. God himſelf, by the prophet Malachi, chap. ii. ver. 7. requires that the Prieſt's lips ישמרו דעת ſhould keep or preſerve knowledge. Methinks the expreſſion is more emphatical than is ordinarily conceived. It ſeems to imply, that the Prieſt ſhould be a kind of repoſitory, or treaſury of knowledge, richly furniſhed with knowledge himſelf, and able alſo abundantly

(g) Διδακτικὸς, aptus, five, idoneus ad docendum.

(h) Διδακτὸς, doctus.

to furniſh and ſupply the wants of thoſe that ſhall at any time have recourſe to him for inſtruction. And therefore it preſently follows: "And they, (that is, the people) "ſhall ſeek the law at his mouth." Yea, the words import, that the Prieſt ſhould be a treaſury of knowledge not to be exhauſted.

He muſt have knowledge not only to ſpend, but to keep; not like thoſe that live from hand to mouth, or whoſe ſtock of knowledge is quickly ſpent in a few ſermons, but he muſt have ſomething ſtill reſerved and laid up in ſtore. Methinks our Saviour doth excellently expound this text, though it be by a parable, Matt. xiii. ver. 52. "Every Scribe that is inſtructed in "the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a "man that is an houſeholder, which bring-"eth forth out of his treaſure things new "and old." Where the γραμματεύς, or Scribe, is the ſame among the Jews, with the νομοδιδάσκαλος, the teacher or expounder of the law. And it is the uſual cuſtom of

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our Saviour, as Grotius obſerves, *(i)* "By "names in uſe among the Jews, to expreſs ſuch offices, as were to be in the Chriſtian church." The γραμματεὺς then, or Scribe, is the ſame with the διδάσκαλος, or Teacher, afterwards in the church of Chriſt. This Scribe is ſaid by our Saviour to be *(k)* inſtructed unto, or for, the kingdom of heaven, *i. e.* well prepared, provided, furniſhed, for the preaching of the goſpel. And, to ſhew that he is ſo, he is compared to the Houſeholder, who, for the maintaining of his family, and the entertainment of his gueſts all the year long, is ſuppoſed to have an ἀποθήκη, or repoſitory for proviſions, (called here his θησαυρὸς, his treaſure) and there to have laid in proviſions καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ, both new ond old, *i. e.* a great ſtore and abundance, proviſions of all ſorts and kinds. As the ſpouſe in the Canticles tells her beloved, chap. vii. ver. 17. "At our "gates are all manner of fruits, both new "and

(i) Nominibus apud Judæos receptis ſignificare munia, quæ futura erant in Eccleſia Chriſtiana.

(k) Μαθητευθεὶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

" and old, which I have laid up for thee." This kind of hoſpitality (however by the iniquity of an ungrateful ſacrilegious age he may be diſabled from exerciſing the other) is the indiſpenſable duty of the Paſtor or Teacher. He muſt keep a table well furniſhed with theſe heavenly proviſions for all comers.

The knowledge of a Teacher, we ſhall eaſily grant, extends itſelf into a very large compaſs, if we conſider what that ſcience is, that he is to teach; Theology, *(l)* the art of arts, and the ſcience of ſciences, as Nazianzen ſpeaks; the queen and miſtreſs of all other diſciplines, to which they do all but *ancillare*, perform the office of handmaids, and yet in ſo doing they are of uſe and ſervice to her.

And, upon that account, the Divine, if he will be complete, muſt be πανεπιστήμων, muſt have compaſſed the ἐγκυκλοπαιδία, in the modern and more noble ſignification of the word; *i. e.* the whole circle of arts and ſciences. And he that hath ſo done, *illi*

des

(l) Τέχνη τεχνῶν, καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν.

des nominis hujus honorem, let him paſs for a perfect Divine; he only is adequate to ſo ample a title. But (God be thanked!) this is only the heroic perfection, not the neceſſary qualification, of a Teacher. A man may very well content himſelf to ſit in a much lower form, and yet ſit ſafely; he may move in a far inferior orb, and yet give much light, and communicate a benign and uſeful influence to the church of God. Let us view therefore, the neceſſary parts of Theology itſelf, wherein the Teacher cannot be ignorant or uninſtructed, but to the very great detriment of his diſciples, and his own greater ſhame and hazard. How ample a field have we ſtill before us! Here is Theology poſitive, polemical, moral, caſuiſtical, and all moſt neceſſary for the Teacher.

As for poſitive divinity, or the knowledge of thoſe neceſſary ſpeculative truths, that are revealed in ſcripture, a man can no more be a Divine, that is unacquainted with this, than he can be a grammarian, that underſtands not the very firſt elements

of

of grammar. And yet of ſo abſtruſe, ſo ſublime a nature are even theſe truths, that for a man rightly to apprehend them, and clearly to explain them, eſpecially to the capacity of his duller hearers, is no very eaſy matter.

Polemical, or controverſial divinity, is *theologia armata*, or that part of divinity which inſtructs and furniſhes a man with neceſſary weapons to defend the truth againſt its enemies. Now the good ſhepherd's office is not only to feed his ſheep, but to ſecure them from the wolves; or elſe his care in feeding them ſerves only to make them the fatter and richer prey. And therefore St Paul, Tit. i. ver. 9. requires that the Teacher ſhould be able *(m)* both by ſound doctrine to exhort his hearers, *(n)* as alſo to convince, or refute gainſayers or oppoſers. *Hæc non ſunt,* του τυχόντος, (as Grotius well gloſſeth on the text) every man cannot do this; and yet every Teacher muſt. The times wherein we

(m) Καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ.

(n) Καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν.

we live do much heighten the neceſſity of this ſtudy: for we may enforce this duty on all Teachers, by the ſame melancholy argument that St Paul doth in the foremen-tioned text. The Teacher (ſaith he) muſt be able to convince gainſayers: why ſo? he gives the reaſon, ver. 10, 11. "There "are many unruly and vain teachers and "deceivers, &c. whoſe mouths muſt be "ſtopt, who ſubvert whole houſes, teach-"ing things which they ought not." Theſe unruly and vain Teachers, theſe deceivers, were never certainly in a greater number than now they are. Theſe men's mouths muſt be ſtopt, there is a neceſſity for it; for otherwiſe they will ſubvert whole houſes, yea and pervert whole pa-riſhes. Not that we have any hopes in this age to ſtop the mouths of our oppo-ſers, ſo as to make them ceaſe ſpeaking (for bawl they will to eternity; they are, as the Apoſtle ſomewhere ſpeaks, (o) un-reaſonable men, that underſtand not, admit not of any topics; no argumentation,

(o) Ἄνθρωποι ἄτοποι.

though never ſo convincing, will make them give back;) but ſo at leaſt, as that they ſhall be able to ſpeak little to the purpoſe, ſo as to ſatisfy ſober, humble, docible perſons, who have not paſſionately eſpouſed an error, or, to ſpeak in the Apoſtle's phraſe, "that are not given up to ſtrong "deluſions, to believe lies, that they may "be damned." In a word, our fate in theſe days is much like that of the rebuilders of Jeruſalem after the captivity, that were neceſſitated every one, with one of his hands to work in the building, with the other to hold a weapon, Nehem. iv. ver. 17. With one hand we muſt build up our people in the doctrine of piety, with the other we muſt reſiſt heretical oppoſers, who otherwiſe will demoliſh as faſt as we build.

And, to quicken us to this part of our ſtudy, methinks no conſideration can be more forcible than this; to obſerve where Miniſters are defective therein, with what triumph and oſtentation deceivers carry ſouls captive, to the diſgrace not only of the

the perſons, but alſo of the function of the Teachers, yea and of truth itſelf, which is wounded thus through their ſides, and bleeds through their weakneſs and folly.

But let us leave this thorny field of controverſial, and ſtep a little into the other more fruitful, of Moral or Practical Divinity. Of this one ſpeaks moſt truly: *(p)* "The knowledge of controverſies is made "neceſſary by heretics, the ſtudy of piety "by God himſelf." Theology is doubtleſs a practical ſcience, nothing in it but what aims at this end. And therefore he that neglects this practical part of it, underſtands not the very deſign of his own profeſſion. Without this a man deſerves no more to be accounted a Divine, than he a phyſician that underſtands little or nothing of therapeutics. 'Tis true there are ſome, (otherwiſe not unlearned men) that deſpiſe this part of theology, as a vulgar, trivial, eaſy, obvious thing. But ſure they very much diſparage their own judgment, who

(p) Controverſiarum ſcientiam neceſſarium fecerunt Hæretici, ſtudium pietatis Deus ipſe mandavit.

let the world underſtand, that they are of this mind: and the event commonly ſhews how much they are miſtaken. For bring theſe Doctors out of their academic cells, ſet them to preach in a country congregation, and they ſoon become the objects of laughter, or rather of pity to the wiſer. To obſerve how they greedily ſnatch at every occaſion of engaging in a controverſy, and that perhaps ſuch an one as was never before heard of by their hearers, but a controverſy they had read in ſome of their books, though long ago dead and buried; thus manfully encountering ghoſts and ſhadows! how learnedly they will diſcuſs the barren ſubtleties of Aquinas or Scotus, which the poor ſouls no more underſtand, than if they had read them a lecture out of Cornelius Agrippa's occult philoſophy. How, when they come to practicals, they are *velut in alium mundum tranſlati*, as if they were entered into a new unknown world; ſo frigid, barren, and lifeleſs, are their diſcourſes on thoſe ſubjects. And may the ſame ſhame, or a ſe-

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rious repentance, attend all the contemners of this uſeful theology!

Laſtly, there is Caſuiſtical Divinity, which I diſtinguiſh from moral or practical, as a more noble ſpecies thereof, and which therefore, deſerves a diſtinct conſideration. For though all caſuiſtical divinity be practical, yet all practical divinity is not caſuiſtical; for the deſign of caſuiſtical divinity is to reſolve only the dubious and difficult caſes that refer to practice. How difficult this ſtudy is, every man that is not a very ſtranger therein, will readily acknowledge. And the neceſſity thereof is evident: for what more neceſſary for a Teacher, than to be able to reſolve his people what their duty is in difficult caſes? Teachers, no doubt, are purpoſely placed by God in theſe croſs-ways, as mercurial ſtatues, not dead, but living ſpeaking ones, directing the perplext traveller towards the heavenly Jeruſalem, and ſaying, (as it is in the Prophet) This is the way; walk therein. And the Lord, by the Prophet Malachi, tells us, that the Prieſt ſhould be ſuch an one, as

that

that The people may ſeek the law at his mouth: the law, *i. e.* the ſenſe of the law, or what that duty is, which the law obligeth them to in doubtful caſes: a very oracle to be conſulted by them on all occaſions. It is true, the greateſt oracle may be ſometimes ſilenced by a greater difficulty: but an oracle altogether dumb is certainly a very lamentable contradiction.

I have all this while ſpoken nothing of the Holy Scriptures, that deep and unſearchable mine, from whence the Divine is to fetch all his treaſure. From hence he is to borrow the principles of all theology, poſitive, polemical, moral, caſuiſtical; and therefore it is evident, that unleſs he be well ſtudied in theſe, he muſt needs be defective in all the reſt. He muſt needs be a weak Divine, that is not *(q)* "mighty "in the ſcriptures," as tis ſaid of Apollos, Acts xviii. ver. 24. And, Lord, how many things are neceſſary to give a man a right underſtanding of theſe ſacred writings! I confeſs,

(q) Δυνατὸς ἐν γραφαῖς.

I confeſs, we are fallen into a very confident age, wherein to interpret ſcripture is counted the moſt obvious and eaſy thing; and every mechanic, that ſcarce underſtands common ſenſe, will venture on the expounding of theſe myſterious books. We have ſo childiſhly departed from the error of the Romiſh church, in aſſerting an inexplicable obſcurity of the ſcriptures, even in things neceſſary, that for fear of this Charybdis we are ſwallowed up in as dangerous a Scylla, to make the ſcriptures even deſpicable and contemptible. For, (r) as Nazianzen truly ſaith, "That "which is thus eaſily underſtood, is gene-"rally with as much eaſe ſlighted and "contemned. But we know who they are, who (s) run from one bad extreme to another. For it is certain, that rightly to underſtand the holy ſcriptures is a very difficult thing, eſpecially for us who live at ſo great a diſtance from thoſe times wherein

(r) Τὸ ῥαδίως ληπτὸν ἅπαν ὑγκαταφρόνητον.

(s) Dum vitant vitia, in contraria currunt.

wherein they were written, and thoſe perſons and churches to whom they were directed. It is no ſlender meaſure of the knowledge of Antiquity, Hiſtory, Philology, that is requiſite to qualify a man for ſuch an undertaking. They know nothing of the holy ſcriptures, that know not this. And therefore thoſe unlearned and ignorant men, that venture on the expoſition of ſcripture, being perfect ſtrangers to theſe parts of learning, muſt of neceſſity wreſt them to their own and their hearers deſtruction.

I cannot omit to take notice here of that common axiom, (*t*) A good Textuary is a good Divine; and to obſerve, that it is moſt true, if rightly underſtood; if by a textuary we mean him who hath not only a concordance of ſcripture in his memory, but alſo a commentary on them in his underſtanding; who thinks it not enough to be ready in alledging the bare words of ſcripture, with the mention of chapter and verſe where it is written, unleſs he knows the

(*t*) Bonus Textualis, bonus Theologus.

the ſenſe and meaning of what he recites. The former, every illiterate ſectary is able to do, who can quote ſcriptures by dozens and ſcores, the tithe whereof he underſtands not, and are little to his purpoſe. The latter is the proper commendation of the Divine. Without this grain of ſalt, the aphoriſm, but now mentioned, moſt juſtly falls under the ſevere cenſure of our learned Prideaux: (*u*) "A good textuary is a "good divine, ſo many, who underſtand "not, mind not, either the text, or divini-"ty, or goodneſs." We have ſeen the neceſſary parts of theology rudely delineated, and yet even by this imperfect draught we may take an eſtimate, how large that man's knowledge ought to be, that is obliged to underſtand all theſe things.

I confeſs that here alſo (and I have as much reaſon to rejoice in it as moſt of my brethren) a latitude is to be allowed, and it were a cruelty worſe than that of Pro-

 cruſtes,

(*u*) Bonus textualis, bonus theologus, clamant quampl rimi, qui nec de textu, nec de theologia, nec de bonitate ſunt ſoliciti.

cruſtes, to ſtretch all men to the ſame giant-like proportion of knowledge that ſome attain to. But yet doubtleſs it is a wiſe and prudent ſeverity, as (x) Nazianzen ſpeaks, "To meaſure every Teacher, and ſtretch "him out to St Paul's rules and canons." And they, as we have already heard, require that he ſhould be διδακτικὸς. apt and fit to teach, *i. e.* in ſome competent meaſure able to inſtruct his hearers in all theſe uſeful parts of theology.

2. I have diſcourſed ſo largely of the firſt requiſite of the Teacher's office, that if I gave over here, I had ſaid enough to convince any ſober perſon of the difficulty thereof. But yet this is not all. A very great prudence alſo is required in the Teacher, or elſe his knowledge will be uſeleſs and unſerviceable. Wiſdom is the ſoul that animates and enlivens knowledge, without which a large knowledge is but like a huge carcaſe, a lifeleſs unactive thing. And if a man thinks, that ſcience and prudence are things inſeparable, ſad experi-

(x) Παχυτέρην τοῖς Παύλου κανόσιν.

experience refutes him. Every learned man is not a wiſe man, and there are ſome who have read very many books, but very few men; who have dwelt ſo much in their ſtudies, that they underſtand little abroad in the world, no not in their own little world, I mean their charges and pariſhes. There are ſome that have a large meaſure of the ſpirit of knowledge, but want the ſpirit of government, which is yet moſt neceſſary for him who is to be a guide of ſouls. Every Teacher is concerned to be wiſe, both for himſelf, and thoſe committed to his charge: for himſelf, to take heed of men, that he be neither betrayed by falſe brethren, nor become a prey to the malice of profeſſed enemies; to decline both the envy and contempt of his neighbours; to keep himſelf within the bounds of his calling; (y) to mind his own buſineſs, &c. to this kind of wiſdom belongs the advice of our Saviour, when ſending forth his Apoſtles, as innocent lambs among the wolves of that age, he cautions them to be

(y) Τὰ ἴδια πράσσειν.

wiſe as ſerpents and innocent as doves, Matt. x. ver. 16. *i. e.* To uſe all honeſt and ſinleſs arts to ſecure themſelves. But this is not the prudence which I principally intend; for if a miniſter be defective in this, he is no man's foe but his own; he hurts only himſelf, and that but in temporal concerns.

I add therefore, that he is to be wiſe for thoſe committed to his charge, leſt by any indiſcretion of his, he obſtructs that which ought to be his great deſign and buſineſs, the eternal ſalvation of their ſouls. And here how many things are there, which a Teacher is concerned to underſtand! He muſt be wiſe ſo to frame his diſcourſes, eſpecially in public, that he ſpeak nothing that may either offend the weak or give advantage to the malicious; that his ſermons may not only be good in themſelves, but adapted and fitted to the neceſſity of his hearers; that he make choice of the moſt ſuitable and powerful arguments, to enforce on them thoſe Chriſtian duties, whereto he exhorts them. He muſt be

wiſe

wiſe in the government of his carriage and actions, diſtinguiſhing eſpecially between lawfulneſs and expediency, and ſhunning not only that which is directly ſinful, but whatſoever is ſcandalous and offenſive. He muſt be wiſe in his common converſe with his people, that he be neither of too eaſy, or too moroſe and difficult an acceſs; but eſpecially he is to be careful of this, in his freer converſation; that he indulge not himſelf any liberty more than ordinary, among thoſe who will make an ill uſe of that wherein there was no ill intended. He is to be wiſe in the choice of his friends, not to inſcribe any man into that catalogue, that may reflect any diſparagement on his perſon or function. For *qui non contemnitur a ſe, contemnitur a ſocio.* He muſt be wiſe, eſpecially in the government of his own family; "For (as the Apoſtle excellently "reaſons) if a man know not how to rule "his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of "the church of God?" 1 Tim. iii. ver. 5. He muſt be wiſe to inquire into the ſtate of his flock, and to diſcern their particular tempers

tempers and conſtitutions; and even to ſearch into their hearts and ſecret inclinations. He muſt be wiſe to adminiſter private counſels and reproofs, duly obſerving the circumſtances of time, of place, of perſon, of diſpoſition. For, as the wiſeſt of men tells us, "A word, fitly ſpoken, is "like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver," Prov. xxv. 11. Theſe, and many other things, the Teacher is deeply concerned to be well verſed in; and what a taſk is this!

If it be objected, That prudence is a thing without our power, an arbitrary gift of God, which he beſtows on whom he pleaſeth, as he doth beauty, or wealth, or a good natural wit; and therefore cannot reaſonably be impoſed upon a man as his duty; I anſwer, If this prudence were wholly out of our election, yet this certainly was left to our free choice, whether we would undertake that office whereto ſo great prudence is requiſite. We have obliged ourſelves to it, by engaging in that function, that cannot be diſcharged without it. But indeed this excellent gift of God is in a great degree

gree put within our power, in conjunction with the divine aſſiſtance. We may and muſt endeavour for it, diligently ſtudy it, carefully obſerve things and perſons, faithfully record experiments, conſult wiſer friends. But above all things we muſt take St James' advice, "If any man want wiſ-"dom, let him aſk of God, who giveth "liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall "be given him," James i. ver. 5. Eſpecially if he deſire it conſtantly, earneſtly, and above all things in the world; if with Solomon he deſpiſe greatneſs and wealth, and all other ſecular advantages; and, before them all, deſire this one thing of God, "That he would give him wiſdom and "knowledge to go in and out before the "people committed to his charge and "guidance," 2 Chron. i. ver. 10.

3. I come now to the laſt, though not the leaſt of thoſe requiſites that are neceſſary to the office of a Teacher, viz. An exemplary Holineſs. For of this I may ſay as the Apoſtle doth, ſpeaking of the three theological graces, 1 Cor. xiii. ver 13.

"And

" And now abideth faith, hope, charity, " theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe is " charity." So, here, there remaineth knowledge, prudence, holineſs, all three neceſſary requiſites to make up a complete Teacher; but the greateſt of theſe is Holineſs. And what he farther ſaith of the ſame grace of charity, in the beginning of the ſame chapter, may with a little change be applied alſo to our preſent purpoſe. If a man had πᾶσαν γνῶσιν, all ſorts of knowledge, ſo as to be able to underſtand all myſteries; if he were prudent, beyond the prodigious meaſure of Solomon's wiſdom; if thoſe endowments were crowned in him with an eloquence more than human, ſo that he were able to diſcourſe like an angel; yet without this holineſs he were as nothing, or at beſt but as the ſounding braſs, or tinkling cymbal. The Prieſt that is not cloathed with righteouſneſs, though otherwiſe richly adorned, with all the ornaments of human and divine literature, and thoſe gilded over with the rays of a ſeraphic prudence and ſagacity, is yet but a naked, beggarly,

beggarly, deſpicable creature, of no authority, no intereſt, no uſe or ſervice, in the church of God. The unholy Teacher, let him preach never ſo well, diſcourſeth to little purpoſe; there will be no life in his doctrine, becauſe his life is ſo deſtitute of the ſpirit of holineſs; he will ſooner damn his own ſoul, than ſave any man's elſe. His diſcourſes, though armed with the moſt powerful oratory, will ſerve to move no other affection in his hearers, than that of indignation againſt his hypocriſy and impudence, to hear him excellently declaim againſt a vice, of which himſelf is notoriouſly guilty; and they will ſay,

Loripedem rectus derideat, Æthiopem albus.

In a word, as a wiſe man well obſerves, "Every notorious vice is infinitely againſt "the ſpirit of government, and depreſſes a "man to an evenneſs with common per-"ſons."

—— *Facinus, quos inquinat, æquat.*

And when a man's authority is thus loſt, he becomes a thing wholly uſeleſs in the

church of God. Uſeleſs, did I ſay? it were well if that were all: he is the moſt pernicious creature that moves on God's earth; he ſerves to the worſt purpoſes, to make men athieſts, infidels, or heretics. Learned and knowing men, of ill lives, have been always the greateſt ſtumbling-block in the church of God; their fall is not ſingle, but attended with the ruin of many others; who, imitating the barbarous civility of thoſe nations that uſe to ſolemnize the funerals of their great men, by ſacrificing a great part of their families, when the Teachers damn themſelves, are ready to die and periſh with them for company. And the fallacy that ruins them, is this: becauſe ſome wiſe men live wickedly, they preſently conclude that wickedneſs is the greateſt wiſdom: as if it were impoſſible for the will to chuſe contrary to the dictates of the underſtanding, or for a man that knows his duty, not to do it. We of this age have reaſon to take ſpecial notice of this. For as Cicero, inquiring into the cauſes of thoſe bold and unheard-of attempts,

tempts, that Catiline and his confederates made upon the commonwealth of Rome, preſently gives this account: "Nos (dico "aperte) nos Conſules, deſumus:" ſo when we are aſtoniſhed at the prodigious blaſphemies, hereſies, and ſchiſms of our times, and wonder at the cauſe of them, we may quickly reſolve ourſelves after the ſame manner: *Nos (dico aperte) nos Paſtores deſumus.* For certainly all the arguments that heretics and ſectaries have made uſe of, to ſeduce our people from obedience unto the moſt excellent doctrine, liturgy, and diſcipline of our church, would have been accounted ridiculous ſophiſms, and no way ſerved their wicked purpoſes, if they had not been furniſhed with a more powerful topic *ab exemplo*, from the vicious lives of ſome clergymen. And as to this:

——— *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis*
Et dici potuiſſe, & non potuiſſe refelli.

I might here be very large in repreſenting the neceſſity of Holineſs in a Miniſter; but I ſhall only obſerve, that the wicked

Teacher ſins with the higheſt aggravation of his guilt, and the leaſt hope of his repentance; he is the greateſt and moſt deſperate ſinner.

The greateſt ſinner: for either he is a perſon of more than ordinary knowledge, or he is not: if not, he ſinned greatly in undertaking that office, to which ſo great a knowledge is requiſite: If he be, his knowledge doubtleſs increaſeth his guilt. "For "he that knoweth his maſter's will, and "doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many "ſtripes." Beſides, he muſt needs ſin with a very ſtrange aſſurance, by living in that wickedneſs which he daily reproves and preaches againſt, and ſo becoming αὐτοκαταχειτος, a condemned man from his own mouth.

But that which I chiefly urge, is this: The wicked Teacher is, of all men living, in the moſt hopeleſs and deſperate condition. It is uſually obſerved of ſeamen, that dwell in the great deep, that, if they are not very pious, for the moſt part they are deſperately wicked, becauſe they daily behold

hold the wonders of the Lord, and beſides live in a continual and very near danger, bordering upon the very confines of death, and being,

Quatuor aut ſeptem digitis a morte remoti,

but a few fingers-breadth divided from their fluid graves. And if theſe conſiderations do not perſuade them to fear the Lord exceedingly, as it is ſaid of the mariners, in Jonah i. ver. 16. it argues that they are exceedingly hardened. The obſervation is truer of the Miniſter; if he be not a good man, he muſt needs be extremely bad; for he daily converſeth in the great deep of the holy ſcriptures, and there ſees and reads ſuch things, that if they do not effectually perſuade him to piety, it is certain he is a man of an obdurate heart.

What remedy is likely to work this man's cure, and repentance? will the dreadful menaces and threats of God's word affright him? No: theſe are daily thundered out of his own mouth, and yet to him they are but *bruta fulmina.* Will the gracious promiſes

miſes of God allure him? No; he daily charms his hearers with theſe, but remains himſelf as the deaf adder. Will thoſe excellent books of learned and pious men, that he reads in his ſtudy, work any good on him? No; he that ſlights God's word, will little regard the words of men. Will the public prayers make him ſerious? No; he daily reads them, and his daily practice is contrary to his daily prayers. Will a medicine compounded of the fleſh and blood of the Son of God, (I mean the holy Euchariſt) do the miſerable man any good? No; he hath frequently received thoſe dear pledges of his Saviour's love, and yet is ſtill as bad as ever, and ſo hath trodden under foot the blood of the everlaſting covenant, wherewith he ſhould have been ſanctified. The Lord look upon this man! for there is no hope of him, without a miracle of divine mercy. Nay, indeed, all theſe excellent means, by being made familiar to him, have loſt their efficacy upon him. Our Saviour, methinks, doth excellently repreſent the hopeleſs condition of a vicious Miniſter,

Miniſter, by a parable, Matt. v. ver. 13. where ſpeaking to the Apoſtles, (conſidered, I ſuppoſe, as Miniſters of the word) he tells them, "Ye are the ſalt of the earth; but "if the ſalt hath loſt its ſavour, wherewithal "ſhall it be ſalted? it is thenceforth good "for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be "trodden under foot of men." Salt, if it be good, is of excellent uſe to ſeaſon many things; but if it become itſelf unſavoury, it is not only the moſt uſeleſs thing, "good "for nothing, but to be caſt out," &c. but irrecoverably loſt; there is nothing will fetch putrid ſalt again; for "if the ſalt "hath loſt its ſavour, wherewithal ſhall it "be ſalted? Thus neceſſary is holineſs in a Miniſter, both for himſelf and others.

I have now done with the difficulty, and conſequently with the danger, of the Paſtoral Office, repreſented from the three grand requiſites thereunto: a very large Knowledge, a great Prudence, an exemplary Holineſs. I ſhall add but one conſideration more, of itſelf abundantly ſufficient to evince the whole; *viz.* That every Teacher

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is accountable for the ſouls committed to his charge. This is the plain doctrine of the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, chap. xiii. ver. 17. "Obey them that have "the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves; "for they watch for your ſouls as they that "muſt give account," &c. A dreadful conſideration this! And St Chryſoſtom tells us, that when he read that text, it did κατασείειν τὴν ψυχὴν, cauſe a kind of earthquake within him, and produce a holy fear and trembling in his ſoul. And, in his commentary on the text, he thus exclaims; (z) "Lord, how, how difficult, how haz-"ardous an undertaking is this! What "ſhall a man ſay to thoſe wretched men, "that raſhly thruſt themſelves into ſuch an "abyſs of judgments? All the ſouls that "are committed to thy conduct, men, wo-"men, and children, thou art to give an "account of." He preſently ſubjoins, (a) "It

(z) Βαβαὶ, πόσος ὁ κίνδυνος; τί ἂν τις εἴποι πρὸς τοὺς ἀθλίους τοὺς ἐμπίπτοντας ἑαυτοὺς τοσαύτῃ τιμωρίᾳ ἀβύσσῳ; πάντων ὧν ἔχεις γυναικῶν, καὶ ἀνδρῶν, καὶ παιδῶν σὺ λόγον δώσεις.

" (a) It is a wonder if any ruler in the " church be ſaved!" A paſſionate hyperbole, expreſſing his deep ſenſe of the extreme danger of the Paſtoral Office.

It is true, indeed, the excellent Biſhop ſpeaks there, of thoſe of his own moſt ſacred order, whoſe place and dignity in the church of God, as it is eminently higher, their charge greater, their inſpection more extenſive; ſo will their account be accordingly. But yet the ſame is true, in its proportion, of every Clergyman, of what order ſoever he be. So St Auſtin, expreſly, (b) " If you mark it, (moſt dear brethren) " you ſhall find, that all the Lord's Prieſts, " not only Biſhops, but Preſbyters and " Miniſters of churches, ſtand in a very " hazardous condition." And he gives a ſhrewd reaſon for what he ſays, a little after,

 (c) " If

(a) Θαυμάζω ἰι τινά ἐςι τῶν ἀρχόντων σωθῆναι.

(b) Si diligenter attenditis, (Fratres chariſſimi) omnes ſacerdotes Domini, non ſolum Epiſcopos, ſed etiam Preſbyteros, & Miniſtros eccleſiarum in grandi periculo eſſe cognoſcitis.

(c) "If at the day of judgment it will, be "a hard taſk for every man to give an ac- "count of his own ſoul, what will become "of Prieſts, of whom God will require an "account of the ſouls of ſo many others "committed to their charge?" He concludes, "magnum opus, ſed gravis far- "cina;" the care of ſouls is indeed a great work, a noble undertaking, but yet a very grievous burden. He muſt be a man of very firm ſhoulders, that is not cruſhed under it.

I have oft-times, not without wonder and indignation, obſerved the ſtrange confidence of Empirics in phyſic, that dare venture on the practice of that noble art, which they do not at all underſtand; conſidering how, for a little paltry gain, they ſhrewdly hazard, or rather certainly deſtroy, the health and lives of men; and have judged them worthy of as capital and ignominious a puniſhment, as thoſe that kill

(c) Si enim pro ſe unuſquiſque vix poterit in die judicii rationem reddere, quid de ſacerdotibus futurum eſt, a quibus ſunt omnium animæ requirendæ?

kill men on the highways. But I have ſoon exchanged this meditation into another of more concernment to myſelf; and my indignation hath quickly returned into my own boſom, when I conſider how much bolder, and more hazardous an attempt it is, for a man to venture on the Prieſtly Office, to miniſter to the eternal health and ſalvation of ſouls: how much ſkill is requiſite to qualify a man for ſuch an undertaking; how great care in the diſcharge of it; what a ſad thing it would be, if through my unſkilfulneſs, or negligence, any one ſoul ſhould miſcarry under my hands, or die and periſh eternally!

We miniſter to Souls. Souls! methinks in that one word there is a ſermon. Immortal ſouls! precious ſouls! one whereof is more worth than all the world beſides, the price of the blood of the Son of God. I cloſe up this with the excellent words appointed by the church to be read at the Ordination of every Prieſt: "Have al-
"ways in your remembrance, how great a
"treaſure is committed to your charge.

" For they are the ſheep of Chriſt, which " he bought with his death, and for whom " he ſhed his blood. The church and " congregation whom ye ſerve, is his ſpouſe " and body. And if it ſhall happen, the " ſame church, or any member thereof, to " take any hurt or hindrance, by reaſon of " your negligence, you know the greatneſs " of the fault, and alſo the horrible puniſh- " ment that will enſue."

And now methinks I may uſe the Apoſtle's words in another caſe, 1 Cor. i. ver. 26. *(d)* " Ye ſee your calling, brethren." You ſee how extremely difficult and hazardous an office it is, we have undertaken: *(e)* Who is ſufficient for theſe things? Whoſe loins do not tremble at this fearful burden on his ſhoulders? Who would not be almoſt tempted to repent himſelf of his undertaking, and to wiſh himſelf any the meaneſt mechanic, rather than a Miniſter? but, alas! this were vain, yea ſinful. We are engaged in this ſacred office, and there

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(d) Βλέπετε τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί.

(e) Καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανός.

is no retreating; we muſt now run the hazard, how great ſoever it be; in we are, and on we muſt. What ſhall we then ſay? What ſhall we do? Surely this is our beſt, yea our only courſe. Let us firſt proſtrate ourſelves at the feet of the Almighty God, humbly confeſſing and heartily bewailing our great and manifold miſcarriages in the weighty undertaking; let us weep tears of blood (if it were poſſible) for the blood of ſouls, which we have reaſon to fear may ſtick upon our garments. The blood of ſouls, I ſay: for when I conſider how many leſs diſcerned ways there be, whereby a man may involve himſelf in that guilt, as not only by an openly vicious example, but even by a leſs ſevere, prudent, and wary converſation; not only by actions directly criminal, but by lawful actions, when offenſive (for by theſe, the Apoſtle aſſures us, "a man may deſtroy the ſoul of his weak "brother, for whom Chriſt died," Rom. xiv. ver. 15.) not only by a groſs negligence, and ſupine careleſneſs, but by every leſſer remiſſion of of thoſe degrees of zeal

and

and diligence, which are requiſite in ſo important an affair; in a word, by not doing all that a man can, and lies within his power, to ſave the ſouls committed to his charge; I ſay, when I conſider this, for mine own part I cannot, I dare not, juſtify myſelf, or plead not guilty before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth; but do, upon the bended knees of my ſoul, bewail my ſin, and implore his pardoning grace and mercy, crying mightily unto him; "Deli-"ver me from this blood-guiltineſs, O my "God, thou God of my ſalvation; and my "tongue ſhall ſing aloud of thy righteouſ-"neſs."

Having laid ourſelves at God's feet, let us not lie idly there, but ariſe, and for the future do the work of God, with all faithfulneſs and induſtry; yea, let us make amends for our paſt negligence, by doubling our future diligence. And for our encouragement here, let us remember, that though many things are required of a Miniſter, yet the chief and moſt indiſpenſable requiſites are theſe two; A paſſionate deſire to ſave

ſouls

ſouls, and an unwearied diligence in the purſuit of that noble deſign. The Miniſter that wants theſe two qualifications, will hardly paſs the teſt, or gain the approbation of God the great judge and trier; but where theſe are found, they will cover a multitude of other failings and defects. Let us therefore, Reverend Brethren, (and may I here conjure both you and myſelf, by the endeared love we bear to our own ſouls, and the precious ſouls committed to our charge, yea by the blood of the Son of God, the price of both!) let us, I beſeech you, from henceforth return to our ſeveral charges, zealouſly and induſtriouſly plying the great work and buſineſs that is before us. Let us think no pains too great, to eſcape that μεῖζον κρῖμα, that greater judgment, pray that otherwiſe attend us. Let us ſtudy hard, and read much, and pity often, and preach in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and catechize the youth, and take wiſe opportunities of inſtructing thoſe, who being of riper years, may yet be as unripe in knowledge; and viſit the ſick, and according

cording to our abilities relieve the poor, ſhewing to all our flock, the example of a watchful, holy, humble converſation. And may a great bleſſing of God crown our labours! let us go on, and the Lord proſper us!

I have done *ad Clerum*, and have but a word more *ad Populum*, to the People.

My brethren, you may poſſibly think yourſelves altogether unconcerned in this whole diſcourſe. But, if you do, you are miſtaken; all this nearly concerns even you. I ſhall only point to you wherein.

1. If the Paſtoral Office be ſo tremendous an undertaking, judge then, I pray you, of the ſacrilegious boldneſs and impiety of thoſe Uzzahs among the Laity, that dare touch this ark, the Prieſts charge and care. If we (my brethren) that have been trained up in the ſchools of the Prophets, that have been educated with no ſmall care and coſt to this employment, that have ſpent a double apprenticeſhip of years in our ſtudies, and moſt of us a great deal more; if we, I ſay,

after

after all this, find reaſon to tremble at our inſufficiency for ſuch an undertaking; how horrible is the confidence, or rather impudence, of thoſe mechanics, that have leaped from the ſhop-board or plough into the pulpit, and thus, *per ſaltum*, by a prodigious leap, commenced Teachers! What ſhall we ſay to theſe mountebanks in the church, theſe empirics in theology? I only ſay this. I can never ſufficiently admire either their boldneſs in venturing to be Teachers, or the childiſh folly and ſimplicity of thoſe that give themſelves up to be their diſciples. It is a miracle, that any ſuch perſon ſhould dare to preach; or, if he do, that any man, in his right wits, ſhould vouchſafe to hear him.

2. This diſcourſe concerning the difficulty and hazard of the Prieſtly Office, ſhews ſufficiently all the people's danger. It is the danger your own ſouls are in, (my brethren) if not carefully looked to, that is the great hazard of our office. O therefore, if you do conſider it, what need have you to look to yourſelves!

3. Laſtly, if our work and office be attended with this difficulty, ſure, it is your duty to pity us, to pray for us, to encourage us, by all poſſible ways and means, to the vigorous performance of it; at leaſt not to add to our load, or diſcourage us, either by your wayward factiouſneſs, or ſtubborn profaneneſs, or ſacrilegious injuſtice: if you do, ſad will be your account.

Remember therefore, the advice of the Apoſtle, Heb. xiii. ver. 17. "Obey them "that have the rule over you, and ſubmit "yourſelves; for they watch for your ſouls, "as they that muſt give an account; *(f)* "that they may do this (*i. e.* attend on this "work of watching over your ſouls) with "joy and not with grief." Grotius' paraphraſe is here moſt genuine: *(g)* "Sweeten and allay the irkſome labour of your "Teachers, by performing to them all "offices of reſpect and love, that they may "with

(f) Ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσι, καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες.

(g) Mulcete eum laborem omnibus obſequiis & officiis, ut cum alacritate potius quam dolore fungantur munere ſatis gravi, etiamſi a vobis nihil triſte accedat.

" with alacrity, and not with grief, dif-
" charge that function, which is of itſelf a
" ſufficient burden, without any addition
" of ſorrow from you."

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed all honour and glory, adoration and worſhip, both now and for ever. Amen.

THE PRINCIPAL PARTS AND BRANCHES OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE, WITH *RULES AND DIRECTIONS* FOR THE DUE PERFORMANCE OF EACH OF THEM.

IN A

CHARGE TO THE CLERGY,

OF THE

DIOCESE OF ST DAVID'S.

Reverend Brethren of the Clergy,

I Shall not waſte my time, and little ſtrength, by detaining you with a long and uſeleſs preface. In ſhort, my buſineſs, at this time, ſhall be to ſet before you the ſeveral parts and branches of that holy office and function, which you have undertaken, together with ſome rules and directions which

which are neceſſary to be obſerved for the due performance of each of them.

The principal parts and branches of the Paſtoral Office are theſe five.

Firſt, Reading Divine Service, or the Prayers of the Church.

Secondly, Preaching.

Thirdly, Catechizing.

Fourthly, Adminiſtring the holy Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper.

Fifthly and laſtly, Viſiting of the Sick.

Firſt, Reading Divine Service, or the Prayers of the Church. This ſome may think to be a ſlight and eaſy matter, that needs not any advice or directions; but they are very much miſtaken. For, to the reading of the prayers aright, there is need of great care and caution. The prayers of the church muſt be read audibly, diſtinctly, and reverently.

1. Audibly, ſo that, if poſſible, all that are preſent may hear them, and join in them. There are ſome that mutter the prayers, as if they were to pray only to them.

themſelves, whereby they exclude moſt of the congregation from the benefit of them.

2. The prayers of the church ought to be read diſtinctly and leiſurely; not to be galloped over, as the manner of ſome is, who read the prayers ſo faſt, that they outrun the attention and devotion of the people, not giving them time to join with them, or to make their reſponſes in their due places. This rule is to be obſerved in reading the prayers throughout, but eſpecially in reading the decalogue, or ten commandments, in the ſecond ſervice. There are ſome that read the commandments ſo thick one upon another, that the people have not time to add that excellent prayer to each of them, "Lord, have mercy upon "us, and incline our hearts to keep this "law."

To this head, of diſtinct reading the prayers, I ſhall only add this one obſervation: whereas upon Sundays and Holidays the church hath appointed a firſt and ſecond ſervice to be read one after another, it is convenient that there be a decent interval

val betwixt them. For judge, I pray you, how abſurd it may ſeem, to conclude the firſt ſervice with St Chryſoſtome's prayer, and The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and immediately without any intermiſſion, to enter upon the ſecond ſervice.

I verily believe, the firſt intention of the church was, that theſe two ſervices ſhould be read at two ſeveral times in the morning; but now cuſtom, and the rubric, direct us to uſe them both at the ſame time. Yet, in cathedral or mother-churches, there is ſtill a decent diſtinction between the two ſervices: for, before the Prieſt goes to the altar to read the ſecond ſervice, there is a ſhort but excellent anthem ſung; in imitation whereof, in the churches of London, and in other greater churches of the country, inſtead of that anthem, there is part of a pſalm ſung.

3. And laſtly, The prayers of the church are to be read with great Reverence and Devotion, ſo as to excite and kindle devotion in the congregation. Thus the prayers of the church are to be read, if we would

keep

keep up the reputation of them, and render them uſeful to the people. But, alas! there are too many Miniſters, who by diſorderly, and indecent, and irreverent reading of the liturgy, diſgrace it, and expoſe it to contempt: to whom the church may complain, as one of old in the poet did of the ill rehearſal of his oration:

Quem recitas, meus eſt, O Fidentine, libellus:
Sed male dum recitas, incipit eſſe tuus.

"The book of prayers which ye read, is "indeed mine: but at the ſad rate you read "it, I am aſhamed of it, it is none of mine, "but your's."

I am verily perſuaded, that this is one cauſe, that there are ſo many ſectaries and ſeparatiſts among us. They find ſo little reverence and devotion in the uſe of our common prayers, that they cannot away with them, but run from the church to the conventicle, where they hope to find more devotion.

II. Another part of the Paſtoral Office is Preaching, *i. e.* (as we commonly uſe the

the word) taking a text or a portion of ſcripture, explaining it, raiſing ſome uſeful point of doctrine from it, and applying it to the edification of the hearers. For otherwiſe the bare reading of the ſcriptures, is ſometimes called preaching; as Acts, xv. ver. 21. "For Moſes (that is the writings "of Moſes) of old time hath in every city "them that preach him, being read in the "ſynagogues every ſabbath-day." But here I take the word Preaching, in the forementioned ſenſe, as now it is uſed. This is a noble part of the Paſtor's duty, but difficult; it is not a work that every one *ſhould* undertake, or *can* perform: for it requires the knowledge and underſtanding of the holy ſcriptures, and in order thereunto, ſome ſkill in the learned languages, and other parts of human learning; it requires a good judgment and diſcretion, I add elocution too. The time will not give me leave (if I were able) to ſet before you all the rules or precepts of the art of preaching, and to give you an intire ſyſtem of it. There are many learned men, who

have written full treatiſes of this ſubject; I mention only our excellent Biſhop Wilkins, who hath publiſhed a treatiſe intituled, *Eccleſiaſtes, or the Preacher*, which I recommend to the reading of younger Divines, and firſt beginners in the art of preaching: to whom alſo I give this farther advice, That they ſhould not at firſt truſt to their own compoſitions, but furniſh themſelves with ſtore of the beſt ſermons that have been publiſhed by the learned Divines of our church. Theſe they ſhould read often and ſtudy to imitate them, and in time they will attain a habit of good preaching themſelves. Among the printed ſermons, thoſe of the late Archbiſhop Tillotſon, are well known and approved by all.

But what ſhall be done in thoſe poor pariſhes, where there are as poor Miniſters, altogether incapable of performing this duty of preaching in any tolerable manner? I anſwer, that, in ſuch places, Miniſters inſtead of ſermons of their own, ſhould uſe the homilies of the church, which ought to be in every pariſh. And they would do well

well, alſo, now-and-then to read a chapter, or ſection, out of the Whole Duty of Man, which (I preſume) is tranſlated into the Welſh tongue. I add, that it would be a piece of charity, if the Clergy of the neighbourhood to ſuch places, who are better qualified, would ſometimes viſit thoſe dark corners, and lend ſome of their light to them, by beſtowing now-and-then a ſermon on the poor people, ſuited to their capacities and neceſſities. They have my leave, yea and authority, ſo to do; and they may be ſure the good God will not fail to reward them.

III. The third work of the Paſtor's office is Catechizing, without which, preaching will not be ſufficient. For if people be not well inſtructed in the neceſſary principles of religion when they are young, they will hardly attain to any ſound knowledge when they are old. For according to the Greek apophthegm;

Νηπιὸν ἰαθρεύειν, καὶ γέροντα νουθετεῖν, ταὐτόν ἐστι.

"To inſtruct an ignorant old man, and to

"raiſe a dead man, are things almoſt "equally difficult." I ſhall not inſiſt upon this ſubject: for the uſefulneſs and neceſſity of catechizing is acknowledged by all, though the work itſelf is by many of the Clergy ſadly neglected. Where ſuch neglect is, it is the duty of the Churchwardens to preſent. I ſhall make it my buſineſs to ſee this fault amended.

IV. Another, and a main part of the Prieſt's office, is the Adminiſtration of the holy Sacraments, Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper.

Firſt, for Baptiſm; the church ſtrictly requires, that it be performed publicly, in the houſe of God, not in private houſes, except in caſe of real neceſſity; as when a child is weak, and cannot, without endangering itſelf, be brought to church. But notwithſtanding this ſtrict order of our church, in moſt places in this country, baptiſm is altogether adminiſtered in private houſes, and ſcarce any (if any) baptized in the church. If this may be allowed, away with the fonts in your churches! what

what do they ſignify? To what purpoſe are they there? If all the authority I am inveſted with can do it, I will ſee this lamentable abuſe of the ſacrament of baptiſm reformed.

But farther obſerve, that as our church ſtrictly requires, that baptiſm be adminiſtred in public, ſo it adviſes, that it be performed (if conveniently it may be) on the Lord's day, in a full congregation of Chriſtian people. Hear the words of the Rubric:

"The people are to be admoniſhed, that "it is moſt convenient that baptiſm ſhould "not be adminiſtred but upon Sundays and "other holidays, when the moſt number of "people come together; as well for that "the congregation there preſent may teſtify "the receiving of them that be newly bap-"tized into the number of Chriſt's church, "as alſo becauſe in the baptiſm of infants "every man preſent may be put in remem-"brance of his own profeſſion made to God "in baptiſm."

I take leave to add, that it is moſt for the intereſt

intereſt of the infant to be ſo baptized, that it may have the benefit of the united prayers of a full Chriſtian congregation, which is much to be valued. Methinks there ſhould be no need of urging this to parents, that have any real love or affection to their children. This would incline them to deſire that themſelves, which the church deſires of them. Remember, I beſeech you, that your children are to be but once baptized; and what is but once done, ought to be well done, in the beſt, and moſt perfect manner.

To come to the other Sacrament, the Euchariſt, or Holy Supper; this is the moſt ſacred and myſterious rite, the apex, the top, and perfection of Chriſtian worſhip, as the ancients term it; and therefore it ought to be performed with the greateſt reverence and ſolemnity in every punctilio of it, according to the direction of our church in her Rubric to the Communion-office. But this you are eſpecially to take care of, that you adminiſter not the holy ſacrament to perſons known to be vicious and ſcandalous.

Hear

Hear the Rubric of the church to this purpoſe, *viz.*

"So many as intend to be partakers of "the holy communion, ſhall ſignify their "names to the Curate, at leaſt ſome time "the day before.—And if any of thoſe be "an open and notorious evil liver, or have "done any wrong to his neighbours, by "word or deed, ſo that the congregation "be thereby offended; the Curate having "knowledge thereof, ſhall call him, and "advertiſe him, that in any wiſe he pre-"ſume not to come to the Lord's table, un-"til he hath openly declared himſelf to "have truly repented and amended his "former naughty life, that the congrega-"tion may thereby be ſatisfied, which be-"fore were offended; and that he hath "recompenſed the parties to whom he hath "done wrong, or at leaſt to declare him-"ſelf to be in full purpoſe ſo to do, as ſoon "as he conveniently may."

I am not ignorant that there are ſome who plead for a free admiſſion to the Lord's table, of all that are members of the viſible church,

church, and not yet excommunicated; and exclaim againſt the excluſion of men from the holy communion, as a device, and uſurpation of the Preſbyterians, and other ſectaries. But theſe men are groſly miſtaken; for you ſee it in the expreſs order of our church. I add, that the ſame order was obſerved in the primitive and apoſtolical churches. For Juſtin Martyr, who flouriſhed within forty years after the Apoſtolic age, (*i. e.* after the death of St John the apoſtle) in his ſecond Apology, tells us, That in his time none were admitted to the holy Euchariſt, but thoſe who lived according to the law of Chriſt. It is a received diſtinction among Divines, that there is a twofold excommunication, *excommunicatio major & minor*, the greater and the leſſer excommunication. The greater excommunication is an excluſion of a man from the communion of the church, and the public ordinances, univerſally. The leſſer excommunication is indeed in order to prevent the greater, and to bring men under the diſcipline and correction of the church,

church, for the amendment of their lives, that ſo at length they may be fit to be admitted to the holy communion.

So our church informs us in her Rubric to the communion-office, where the Miniſter, repelling any from the communion, is required "to give an account thereof to "the Ordinary, within fourteen days after "at the fartheſt; and the Ordinary ſhall "proceed againſt the offending perſon, "according to the canon."

So much for the adminiſtration of the holy Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper.

V. I come to the fifth and laſt part of the Paſtoral Office. *viz.* Viſiting the Sick. For this we have an expreſs command in the holy ſcriptures, James, v. ver. 14. "Is "any ſick among you? Let him call for "the Elders of the church." *i. e.* the Preſbyters of the church; as ſuppoſing they may not otherwiſe have notice of his ſickneſs. Sick men too commonly neglect this duty, oftentimes out of fear, proceeding from an evil conſcience. They look upon

the Miniſter's coming to their ſick bed, as a kind of a meſſenger of death, for which they are not ſo well prepared. But if the ſick man does not ſend for his Miniſter, the Miniſter (having other notice of his ſickneſs) ought to go to him without being ſent for.

How to perform this duty towards ſick men aright, our church fully directs him, in her excellent Office of the Viſitation of the Sick, which is ſo full and perfect, that there needs nothing to be added to it.

But obſerve farther, that it is the Paſtor's duty to viſit his Pariſhioners, not only when they are ſick, but alſo when they are well and in good health; not only with common neighbourly viſits, but viſiting them to the purpoſes of Salvation. He ſhould ſometimes go home to their houſes, and miniſter to their ſouls in private, mildly reproving them for what faults he obſerves in them, admoniſhing them of ſuch duties as he knows them to be ignorant of; as not coming conſtantly to church, not frequenting the communion, and the like.

He

He is there ſeriouſly to call upon them, to mind them of the great concern of their immortal ſouls, in time to prepare for ſickneſs and death, and the tremendous judgment that follows. Such particular private applications of the Miniſter to his Pariſhioners, are highly uſeful, and will render the public ordinances more beneficial to them.

To you, my Brethren of the Clergy, I ſhall conclude all I have to ſay, in a ſhort but ſerious and affectionate exhortation.

1. In the firſt place, and above all things, follow after holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Holineſs is a qualification, indiſpenſably required in every Chriſtian, and that *ſub periculo animæ*, as he hopes to be ſaved, and to ſee the face of God in heaven. And can it be imagined, that a Miniſter of God ſhould be ſaved without it? Nay, he is obliged to holineſs in a double capacity, both as a Chriſtian, and as a Miniſter. As a Miniſter, his calling obliges him to be almoſt perpetually converſant about holy things; which he profanes, if

he be not himſelf a holy perſon. He profanes God's holy worſhip, his holy word, and his holy ſacraments; and God will moſt certainly and ſeverely puniſh ſuch profaners of his ſacred things.

Nay, a Miniſter of God is obliged to an exemplary holineſs. Epiphanius tells us, That the duty of the Laity is τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ τὸ συγγνωστὸν, a more moderate meaſure of piety, ſuited to their capacity, and tempered with a greater indulgence and mercy. But from the Clergy is expected ἡ περὶ πάντων ἀκριβολογία, "a "more exact and accurate courſe of life in "all things." And St Paul ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, when he charges Titus to ſhew himſelf "in all things an example or pattern "of good works," Titus ii. ver. 7. For every pattern muſt be excellent and extraordinary, and ſuch as is worthy of imitation. This the people will expect from us, that we ſhould go before them, and lead them on to virtue and piety by our example. And however they fail in other civilities, they will be ſure generally to obſerve this piece of good manners, they will readily give

give us the precedence in the way to heaven, and be content to follow us at a very humble diſtance. So that our converſation muſt be ſomewhat extraordinary, if we expect by our example to bring them up to the ordinary and neceſſary meaſures of piety; and we ſhall hardly be able to do well, unleſs we ourſelves do ſomewhat excellently.

2. Be diligent, very diligent, in the buſineſs of your calling; for it is a laborious calling, that will not admit of eaſe and idleneſs. I ſpeak eſpecially to the younger Clergy; ply your ſtudies, give yourſelves to reading, chiefly the holy ſcriptures, and the writings of learned men that have explained them to you.

The exhortations of St Paul to Timothy are full to this purpoſe; "Till I come give "attendance to reading, to exhortation, "to doctrine; meditate upon theſe things, "give thyſelf wholly to them, that thy "profiting may appear unto all," 1 Tim. iv. ver. 13. 15. Conſider, I beſeech you, what kind of perſon he was, whom St Paul thus

thus exhorts: he was one, who from a child knew the holy ſcriptures; one that had the gift of prophecy, and was endued with extraordinary and even miraculous gifts. This man St Paul earneſtly calls upon to be diligent in reading and ſtudy; what need then have we, even the beſt of us, of this diligence, who are ſo very far ſhort of his accompliſhments? In a word, an idle perſon in any calling whatſoever is very contemptible; but an idle and lazy parochial Prieſt, is of all mortals the moſt contemptible and inexcuſable. What! ſo much buſineſs, and that of ſo much importance, as the ſalvation of men's ſouls, and yet idle? For the Lord's ſake ſhake off ſloth, rouſe up and beſtir yourſelves in the buſineſs of your calling, remembring that the ſouls of your people, and your own ſouls, are at ſtake.

3. And laſtly, Be much and often in prayer to God, eſpecially in private prayer. Content not yourſelves with reading prayers at church, but take care alſo that there be daily prayers in your families, at leaſt

morning

morning and evening; and ſome time every day retire to your ſtudies, and there upon your bended knees, earneſtly beſeech Almighty God to have mercy on you, to direct and aſſiſt you in your ſtudies, and to give you good ſucceſs in your labours. Pray for the ſouls of the people committed to your charge; pray for your own ſouls, "that while you preach to others, you "yourſelves may not be caſtaways."

If you do theſe things; if you adorn your holy profeſſion with a holy converſation; if you be diligent in the buſineſs of your calling; if you pray daily to God for his help and aſſiſtance; he will not fail to be with you, and to carry you through all difficulties with honour and ſucceſs; and, in the end, your reward will be great and glorious, and an abundant compenſation of all your labours. So St Peter tells you in that excellent text, 1 Peter, v. ver. 2. 3. 4. with which I ſhall conclude, "Feed the "flock of God which is among you, taking "the overſight thereof not by conſtraint, "but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of

"a ready

" a ready mind; neither as being lords
" over God's heritage, but being enſam-
" ples to the flock. And when the chief
" ſhepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a
" crown of glory that fadeth not away."

CIRCULAR

A

CIRCULAR LETTER,

TO THE

REVEREND THE ARCHDEACONS,

AND THE

REST OF THE CLERGY,

OF THE

DIOCESE OF ST DAVID's.

My Brethren,

BEING desirous, according to my duty, to promote the salvation of those souls which the Providence of God hath, in a particular manner, committed to my care; and being sensible, that this great work can be no otherwise effected, than by advancing the interest and power of religion in the hearts and lives of men; give me

leave to ſuggeſt to you, my brethren, my fellow-labourers in the Lord, ſome few methods, which I conceive may be of admirable uſe to this purpoſe; which, if we are ſo happy as to accompliſh, will greatly tend to the increaſe of piety and virtue in my dioceſe, and enable us all to give up our accounts at the laſt great day, when we ſhall appear before the tribunal of Chriſt, with joy, and not with grief.

The firſt thing, therefore, that I would recommend to you, and which I do earneſtly exhort you to, is, To apply yourſelves with great diligence, to eſtabliſh the practice of Family-Devotion in all the families of your reſpective pariſhes. I need not prove to you what is ſo very manifeſt, that nothing helpeth more to keep up a ſenſe of religion in the minds of men, than a ſerious, reverent, and conſtant performance of this neceſſary duty; whereby both the glory of God is much advanced, and many bleſſings do alſo accrue to thoſe, who, in this manner, daily adore and praiſe their great Creator, the lover of ſouls. But in order

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to this purpoſe, I muſt, with ſome warmth, beſeech you to make a particular application to every houſekeeper in your ſeveral pariſhes, and to endeavour to convince them, if need be, how much it is their intereſt, as well as duty, to worſhip God daily in their families; ſince it is not only the propereſt expreſſion of their own piety, but the likelieſt method to make their children and ſervants obedient and faithful: and I would farther adviſe you to ſecond your exhortations of this kind, with recommending to them ſome ſmall books, which explain and preſs this duty, and lay down forms for the performance of it. I am aſſured, that there are ſeveral * books of this

* Books of this kind are, *viz.*

The Neceſſary Duty of Family Prayer. Price 1d. or 6s. per hundred.

Exhortation to Houſe-keepers to ſet up the Worſhip of God in their Families, with daily Prayers for Morning and Evening. Price 1d. or 6s. per hundred.

The Neceſſity of Family-Prayer, and the deplorable condition of Prayerleſs Families conſidered, with Prayers for their Uſe. Price 1d. or 6s. per hundred.

All three printed by J. Downing, Bartholomew-Cloſe.

Family

kind to be purchaſed at very eaſy rates; and I could wiſh, that your own abilities, or the aſſiſtance of ſome charitable and well diſpoſed neighbour, might lodge theſe *gratis*, in the families of the poorer ſort; though if you procure a ſufficient number of ſuch books, it is not to be doubted, but that, when your pariſhioners think them neceſſary, they will readily pay for the ſame, the price being ſo very inconſiderable.

Theſe your exhortations, and procuring books to that purpoſe, being backed with your frequent and repeated admonitions, will, I hope, by the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, bring all your pariſhioners to the conſtant and ſerious practice of Family-Prayer; eſpecially if you repreſent unto them

Family Devotion; or an Exhortation to Morning and Evening Prayer, with two Forms ſuited thereunto, as alſo for Private Uſe. By E. Gibſon, D. D.

Printed for R. Whitledge, Price 3d. or 20s. per hundred.

Family Religion; or the Exerciſe of Prayer and Devotion in Private Families.

Printed for B. Aylmer. Price 2d. or 10s. per hundred.

them at the ſame time, the great importance of exerciſing this duty, not only as it relates to the propagating of true piety and religion in the preſent age, but alſo as it tends to the ſecuring of them in all future ages. For the example of parents and maſters will, in all probability, make ſuch deep impreſſions upon the minds of their children and ſervants, as to excite them to an imitation of their practice, whenever they ſhall themſelves become maſters of families: And ſo then this duty will not only be obſerved in their families at preſent, but probably alſo in all thoſe families that ſhall deſcend and iſſue from them for ever.

And to make this exerciſe of family devotion ſtill more uſeful, you muſt farther exhort them, when they have leiſure, as they often have on Winter evenings, eſpecially on Sundays, to introduce their family prayers with reading ſome portions of holy ſcripture, and of other pious and religious books, proper to inſtruct and perſuade them to the diligent diſcharge of all chriſtian virtues.

And ſince it is matter of great grief and ſorrow to all thoſe who unfeignedly labour in the goſpel, and are intruſted with the care of precious and immortal ſouls, to obſerve in their ſeveral pariſhes the habitual neglect of this duty, upon the conſtant uſe whereof, the ſpiritual welfare of their pariſhioners doth ſo much depend; I cannot forbear ſolemnly charging you to exert yourſelves with more than ordinary zeal in this matter; that ſo this affair, of ſuch great conſequence to the good of ſouls, may in your ſeveral pariſhes be brought to its wiſhed-for and deſired perfection.

The ſecond thing that I ſhall recommend and earneſtly exhort you to, as of ſingular uſe towards promoting religion in a wicked and degenerate age, is, To endeavour the erecting Charity-Schools in your ſeveral pariſhes; wherein the children of the poor may be taught to read and write, and to repeat our excellent church catechiſm, and to underſtand the principles of our holy religion, which are ſo neceſſary to their eternal ſalvation; and whereby they may

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be fitted to receive farther inſtructions from thoſe diſcourſes you ſhall from time to time make to them from the pulpit. It is not to be doubted but that a great part of that profaneneſs and debauchery which prevails among the poorer ſort, is very much owing to that groſs ignorance of religion which abounds among them: now what remedy ſo proper to prevent this fatal miſchief, as the chriſtian education of poor children under ſtrict diſcipline? And this ought the rather to be attempted, becauſe I am informed many poor people in this diocese are very deſirous that their children ſhould receive the benefit of ſuch an education, though they are not able to be at the charge of procuring it for them.

This I do the more heartily recommend to you, becauſe it hath already been bleſſed by the gracious Providence of God, with great ſucceſs in many other parts of the kingdom, eſpecially in and about the cities of London and Weſtminſter; where there are not only great numbers of children inſtructed *gratis*, in the principles of the chriſtian religion,

ligion, but are alſo placed out to ſeveral occupations, and by degrees made uſeful members of the commonwealth. And indeed I hardly know any charity that is attended with greater advantages to the ſouls and bodies of poor creatures, than this which I now recommend to you.

In order to this purpoſe, I beſeech you to apply yourſelves to ſuch of your pariſhioners as are willing to contribute towards carrying on this very good work, and who are able by their ſubſcriptions to anſwer the neceſſary expence which attends it. Lead them by your own example, and upon this occaſion do not fail to throw your mite into the treaſury. Neither you nor they, I am ſatisfied, will ever be able to employ your alms better, nor direct your charity to nobler purpoſes. As to the methods of erecting and governing theſe charity-ſchools, they are laid down with ſo much judgment and exactneſs, in the Account of Charity-Schools, that is annually printed at London, and diſtributed all over the kingdom, that I ſhall ſuggeſt nothing to you upon

upon that head, but desire you to consult that account, and seriously peruse it for your farther direction.

And since I am upon the subject of instructing children, I desire you to signify to all Schoolmasters, within your several parishes, that they take care to use prayers in their schools, morning and evening; and that they not only instruct their scholars in the church catechism, but also teach them short prayers for their private use, obliging them never to omit repeating them morning and evening. And I desire you to enquire frequently, how the Schoolmasters of your several parishes discharge these above-mentioned duties; it being of the greatest consequence to the welfare both of the church and the state, that all children should be religiously and piously educated. And therefore I require you, from time to time, to signify to me the names of such Schoolmasters, as after your repeated admonition shall neglect this duty, as to the aforesaid particulars, that their licences may be revoked, and that they may be de-

clared for the future incapable of ſo great a truſt.

A third thing that I ſhall recommend to you, as very uſeful towards propagating chriſtian knowledge, is, To endeavour to diſpoſe all parents that are of ability, in your ſeveral pariſhes, to ſupply each of their children, before they marry, or are otherwiſe ſettled in the world, with a ſmall * library, containing books of practical divinity, to the value of three, four, or five pounds, fixed in a little preſs with ſhelves proper for that purpoſe. This will make any portion, that parents are able to beſtow upon their children, a true bleſſing; and indeed is a very valuable preſent, ſince it tends

* There has been ſince printed a ſheet of paper, called The Young Chriſtian's Library; or a Collection of good and uſeful Books, proper to be given to young Perſons, by their Parents, in order to their Chriſtian Education and Improvement, &c. Printed and ſold by J. Downing, in Bartholomew-Cloſe, near Weſt-Smithfield. [The Books taken upon the Catalogue of "the Society for "promoting Chriſtian Knowledge," will ſupply the Reader with a great variety of excellent Books for the young, and the poor.]

tends ſo directly to provide for the welfare of their immortal ſouls. And, to render this moſt effectual, they ought to injoin their children, at the ſame time they make them this preſent of books, to read them often and ſeriouſly, and to keep them with care and ſafety during their lives, and then to leave them in the ſame good condition to their poſterity; by which means the knowledge of religion may be propagated from age to age in all future generations.

I need not ſuggeſt to you the advantages that will ariſe from your ſucceſs in this matter; they appear at firſt ſight, and a little conſideration will make them familiar to you. And, that the poor may be brought to give their attendance in the houſe of God, I conceive it may be very proper for you to perſuade the gentlemen, and other perſons of ability, within your ſeveral pariſhes, who uſually, on Sundays, relieve the poor at their own doors, to confine that charity to ſuch as have that day been at church; and, if it may be convenient, even to give their alms at the church

doors. This method will, in all probability, excite the poor to diligence, in attending the public worſhip of God.

I ſhall conclude this long letter, with praying to God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, that he would enable you, by his grace, to perform what I have recommended to you, as tending very much to the honour and ſervice of our great Maſter; and that he would be pleaſed to bleſs your ſincere endeavours with ſucceſs; And, at the ſame time, I do aſſure you, that I am,

My dear Brethren,

Your moſt affectionate Brother,

And humble Servant,

GEORGE ST DAVID'S.

BRITISH MUSEUM 14 JY 74

FINIS.